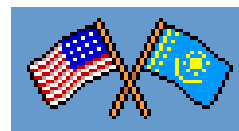


ECA ALUMNI KAZAKHSTAN ALUMNIPOST



U.S. Embassy Almaty Public Affairs Section

#19 (March-April-May 2006)

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NEW AMERICAN CORNER IN KARAGANDA

On March 10, Ambassador John Ordway and the Deputy Akim of the Karaganda Oblast Serikzhan Kanayev opened an American Corner at the Karaganda Oblast Gogol Library. The ceremony was attended by local media, U.S. Government program alumni, Peace Corps volunteers, English teachers from Karaganda schools and universities, librarians, NGO representatives, political parties and local government. Sholpan Baimursina, the American Corner Coordinator at the Karaganda Oblast Library, told the audience about AC project plans and activities already underway, including American film screenings and discussion clubs, conducted with support of Peace Corps volunteers.



Photo by PAS: Ambassador Ordway at American Corner Opening in Uralsk

NEW AMERICAN CORNER IN URALSK

On April 27, Ambassador Ordway, along with the Deputy Akim of the Western Kazakhstan Oblast, officially opened Kazakhstan's sixth American Corner located in the city of Uralsk. USG alumni, NGO representatives, local librarians, teachers of English, and media attended the event. After the ceremony, Ambassador Ordway, the library director, and the American Corner coordinator spoke with journalists about the project, which is a partnership between the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section and the Western Kazakhstani Oblast Library for Children and Youth.

*Elmira Kireyeva
IRC Coordinator*

AMBASSADOR ORDWAY HOSTS ALUMNI RECEPTION IN ASTANA

An alumni reception was hosted by Ambassador Ordway on March 7 in Astana. The diplomatic event brought together over 50 guests, representing alumni of various USG programs, including Fulbright, RSEP, CI, JFDP, TEA, UGRAD, and FLEX. The March 7 event was another opportunity to meet friends, colleagues and new people, and discuss projects and developments.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER MEETS WITH FLEX ALUMNI IN ASTANA

On April 10, during his visit to Kazakhstan, Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher met with seven FLEX alumni in Astana. Young leaders were excited to meet for an early morning roundtable breakfast with Assistant Secretary Boucher and share their current and future career plans. Most of them continue their education at Kazakhstani universities and have plans to go for studies to the U.S. under a Bolashak stipend. Assistant Secretary Boucher held an interesting discussion with each of the guests and was delighted to learn more about their impressions and perceptions of their U.S. experience and the outcomes of such studies in the future life.

PAS

ALUMNI GATHER TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN ALUMNI NETWORKS

On May 18, representatives from six USG alumni associations met to discuss effective ways of building and strengthening alumni networks. The alumni networks in attendance included the Alumni Research Association, Open Alumni Club, American Alumni Club, FLEX Alumni Association of Kazakhstan, the Alumni Cooperation Team and members of the UGRAD alumni community. The representatives from the various networks shared information about each organization's development and activities, as well as explored opportunities for future cooperation. Also in attendance was Mark Pomar, President of IREX. At the end of the discussion, representatives from the associations and Mr. Pomar discussed the value and future of US Government-supported exchange programs.

IREX

PAS CULTURAL NEWS

On April 27, as part of the Fifth Almaty International Jazz Festival, William Cepeda and his fellow Puerto Rican musicians wowed over one thousand jazz aficionados with a mixture of jazz rhythms and African melodies. This Puerto Rican sound, previously unheard in Kazakhstan, came to listeners like a virtuoso dialogue, particularly when Cepeda broke out a collection of sea shells and started “playing” them. In addition to giving an extraordinarily well-received concert, the group gave a master class to budding musicians (ages 6-16) at the Youth Jazz School. The young jazz students were thrilled with the contact with real jazz musicians.

On the 21st of May, the New York-based group *Continuum* played for the first time in Almaty. The modern classical group performed in the Nauryz Music Festival at the Musical Conservatory in Almaty. *Continuum* impressed Kazakhstani and regional composers and conservatory students with their musical abilities. Most of the pieces were never heard in the country before. In addition to the concert, *Continuum* conducted a master class for the students of the Conservatoire. Each musician taught a group of 15-20 students of different levels. The students took a deep interest in the new music and were captivated with the musicians’ level of professionalism.

Leila Aitmukhanova
Cultural Affairs Assistant

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

PAS SUPPORTS KAZAKHSTANI ENGLISH TEACHERS

On April 20-22, 2006 the 6th Annual National Association of Teachers of English of Kazakhstan (NATEK) conference was held in Kokshetau. The topic of the forum was “English Language Teaching: Current Trends and Future Direction.” About 200 participants from all over Kazakhstan, as well as the guests from the USA, England, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan exchanged expertise, discussed plans and projects for the future, networked, visited schools and resource centers, and toured the city. The conference was co-sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Almaty Public Affairs Section, Peace Corps and regional Associations of Teachers of English. It was a great professional event aimed at helping EL teachers be prepared for the challenges of ongoing educational reform

in the country and for the opportunities it offers. A spirit of enthusiasm and cooperation prevailed at the conference.

JAZZ CHANTS IN CLASSROOMS

On May 15-16, 2006 Carolyn Graham, English language specialist, worked with pre-service and in-service school and university teachers in Almaty demonstrating the musical and rhythmical qualities of the English language. Some participants even traveled hundreds of miles to meet Ms. Carolyn Graham. And the workshops met their expectations. The participants were introduced a world of rhythm and creativity, a world where both teachers and students are equally motivated and talented. By the end of the workshops the teachers were able to create vocabulary, grammar, and function chants and shared them with all those who were present. But the most valuable accomplishment was that the participants realized that using music and storytelling in the classroom helps much in discovering aspirations, strong points and potential talents of their students. The program familiarized approximately 80 English teachers from various schools and universities with an entirely different approach to teaching English, an approach which focuses on using music, songs, storytelling and drama, as well as developing students’ creative abilities in the EFL classroom.



*Photo by PAS: Carolyn Graham
with English teachers*

KAZAKHSTANI TEACHERS VOTE FOR ALTERNATIVE TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

From April 17 through April 29 the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section hosted the English language specialist Lisa Morgan, who did two series of week-long workshops for university faculty and high school teachers in Almaty.

She also worked with the same audience in Kostanai, and made a plenary speech at the 6th National Association of Teachers of English of Kazakhstan Annual Conference in Kokshetau.

The program focused on assessment and evaluation in teaching English and embraced issues ranging from advantages and disadvantages of standardized tests to self- and peer assessment, and using and designing rubrics. Particular emphasis was made on alternative types of assessment versus traditional ones, which is extremely important for the ongoing reform of education in Kazakhstan. The participants of the program received a set of handouts that can easily be adapted to their own teaching environment. The program demonstrated to about 305 EL teachers ways of monitoring progress in language development through both traditional and alternative types of assessment.

Lyudmila Smirnova
English Language Specialist

NEWS FROM AMERICAN CORNERS

On May 17, the American Corner in Atyrau conducted a discussion on American life styles for young patrons of the library. Participants talked about music, arts, and fashion in the United States.

On May 17, students from North Kazakhstan State University met with Victor Frolov, USG alumnus at the American Corner in Petropavlovsk. During the meeting the participants learned about studying in the U.S., admission requirements, how to fill out applications, testing, life on a university or college campus, and international student admissions.

On April 5, the American Corner in Petropavlovsk hosted teachers of English to speak about interactive methods of English language teaching. The AC’s staff selected the most relevant material for the subject.

On April 29 about 70 participants attended a conference called “English is a Mediator of Friendship and Collaboration” organized by the American Culture Center in Oskemen, in cooperation with the City Education Department.

Elmira Kireyeva
IRC Coordinator

MUSKIE ALUMNI PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN GEORGIA

On March 24-27, 2006 Muskie alumni Dina Khassenova and Larissa Savitskaya attended the 2006 regional Muskie alumni conference "Building Democratic Societies and Market Economies in Eurasia" in Gudauri, Georgia. Muskie alumni from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan gathered together to discuss political, economic and social problems in the region.



Dina and Larissa with fellow alumni

The conference was divided into several panels: Government, Legal and Security Issues; Education and Social Issues; and Business and Economic Development. Dina Khassenova made a presentation on "Managing Oil Wealth" in which she discussed the experience of resource-dependent economies and policy recommendations for Kazakhstan to avoid the resource curse. Dina Khassenova received many questions from the audience about the economic and political situation in Kazakhstan.

Larissa Savitskaya's presentation was entitled "Introduction of Credit System in Higher Education: Tool for Democratization of Student Learning Paths." It covered differences between centralized curriculum and a credit system pointing out major advantages of the latter. These are openness and flexibility in student choice about his/her pathways that match student expectations and university offers. Larissa Savitskaya offered some strategic recommendations for credits system implementation that can be used by any university. The participants from Georgia showed great interest in her presentation because Georgia is developing a policy on credit system implementation.

*Dina Khassenova and Larissa Savitskaya
Muskie alumni*

KAZAKHSTANI UGRAD ALUMNI PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

On April 29-30, twelve alumni of the Eurasian Undergraduate Fellowship Program participated in the Eurasian Undergraduate Fellowship Program Regional Conference entitled "Migration and Human Trafficking in Central Asia: Prospects for Regional Cooperation" in Almaty, Kazakhstan. More than 50 alumni from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the conference.

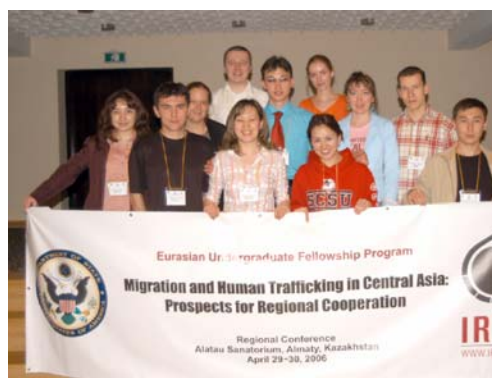


Photo by IREX: Kazakhstani participants

On the first day of the two-day conference, presenters from various organizations such as the International Organization for Migration, the Eurasia Foundation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), representatives from the American Embassy, along with other local non-governmental organizations, provided conference participants with a solid, fundamental knowledge of the statistics and facts surrounding migration and trafficking in Central Asia. Alumni were also exposed to contemporary theories in addressing these problems.



Photo by IREX: Tamara Stebunova gets excited during a working group session

On the second day of the conference, Nancy Coan, Senior Program Officer, and Olja Hocevar Van Wely, Program Coordinator, both with IREX's Civil Society Division, conducted a seminar entitled "Anti-Trafficking Awareness Models." This was an interactive presentation which allowed alumni to express their concerns about trafficking and come up with possible activities and strategies for implementation in their home countries. In addition, strategies to educate citizens on labor migration were introduced. At the end of the day, representatives from Public Affairs Office presented information on grant opportunities available which could provide alumni with resources to execute their ideas.

UGRAD ALUMNA SHARES HER EXPERIENCE AT CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO THE FOUNDATIONS OF CULTURE

On May 26, Milana Karayanidi, UGRAD '05, gave a presentation on her visit to Vienna. Milana was selected to participate in a conference entitled "Foundations of Culture" which was held in Castle Neuwaldegg, Vienna from May 2 - May 5, 2006. The Conference was organized by the Neuwaldegg Institute, a division of the Educational Initiative for Central and Eastern Europe. The conference focused on the basis of culture by Josef Pieper. Milana talked about the conference, which was about leisure as the basis of culture. Then she encouraged participants to apply for this conference through the web site www.neuwaldegg.org. Participants were active, asking questions and sharing their own opinion on the statements of the philosopher Josef Pieper. At the end Milana showed pictures which she took in Vienna.



Photo by IREX: Milana with participants

IREX

ALUMNI DEVELOP BUSINESS PLANNING SKILLS

In May, Ganiya Tazhina, PhD, a specialist on organizational consulting and training, delivered an interactive training on business planning for nine UGRAD, RSEP, SABIT, and CI alumni. The interactive training began with an overview of business planning, followed by small group business planning development and presentation. Each presentation was followed by a SWOT analysis and group discussion. In addition, alumni shared their own experience in business and received guidance and recommendations from each other. Alumni reported in their evaluations that the training was very useful and interesting.



Photo by IREX: Alibek Nurbekov (UGRAD '01), Arsen Ashimov (UGRAD '06) and Erkin Kaldarbekov (SABIT '06) develop a business plan.

ALUMNI LEARN TO CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATE IN DEBATES

In April, Almat Madaliev from the National Debate Center conducted a training for alumni on leading and participating in debates. Mr. Madaliev began the session by pointing out the different types of debate and asked participants to express their training interests. The alumni stated that they would like to learn about debating from the business perspective. Mr. Madaliev then tried to focus on this aspect of debate, providing guidance on debate elements including style of dress, use of visual aids, and methods of argumentation. During the second half of the training, Mr. Madaliev initiated an activity which opened up some discussion and debate. At the conclusion of the training, Mr. Madaliev shared information about upcoming debate tournaments and encouraged alumni to participate.

The National Debate Center has been active in Kazakhstan for almost ten years and is well known for training participants of the TV debate show "Gorod Budushhego" (The City of the Future) as well as junior parliamentary staff.

ALUMNI LEND A HELPING HAND TO VULNERABLE YOUTH

On May 4, UGRAD Alumni Fellow Nurzhan Kozhakhmetov (UGRAD '05) conducted a resume writing workshop for youth who live at the Rehabilitation Center for young children in Almaty. Most of these youth are orphaned or have drug or alcohol-addicted parents. At the beginning of the seminar, Nurzhan explained the kinds of resumes and then distributed some resume samples to demonstrate how to represent work experience. The youth of the Center actively participated by answering Nurzhan's questions and asking him many questions in return. At the end of the seminar, class teacher, Yelena Garbunova, expressed her gratitude to the U.S. State Department and IREX for this training, noting that the youth are graduating this year and most will directly enter the workforce.



Photo by IREX: Nurzhan Kozhakhmetov (UGRAD'05) delivers a resume-writing training

RECENT UGRAD ALUMNI DISCUSS LEADERSHIP STYLES WITH PROMINENT ALUMNI

Recent UGRAD alumni, eager to meet with and learn from the previous generation of alumni, organized a roundtable to discuss leadership styles. Prominent alumni in attendance included Magzhan Auezov (FSA 1994), managing director of Kazkommertsbank, and Issin Geniyat, (FSA 1994) chief of the Pension Funds Department at Halyk Bank. The UGRAD alumni also invited Sergey Filin, director of *Director's Institution*, a business consulting firm to serve as an expert on leadership styles.

The recent UGRAD alumni discussed the importance of learning organizations and seeking advice from the more experienced alumni on how different styles of management might affect to their career opportunities.

Magzhan Auezov talked about the management style at Kazkommertsbank, sharing his opinion that good managers should be good teachers as well, noting that he has given lectures for more than eight years. Sergey Filin disagreed with this approach, asserting that that only one person could be a leader and that it not necessary to teach other managers to be a leader in the same organization. Recent alumni were advised to utilize their networks and to share their contacts with others. Mr. Auezov closed the discussion by noting that becoming a good leader "comes from practice and experience rather than from books and advice".

FLEX ALUMNI RUN AN ANTI-TOBACCO CAMPAIGN

FLEX alumni from six regions of Kazakhstan participated in the *We Care!* anti-tobacco campaign. The project consisted of four phases. In the first phase, FLEX alumni led seminars at high schools, having medical professionals explain the negative influence of smoking on people. Some high schools also had debates and discussed this issue. Overall, 23 alumni lectured to 420 high school students.

In the second stage, FLEX alumni organized a national competition of anti-tobacco posters. Around 100 works of students and professional designers were received by the panel. A sixteen-year-old student from Aktobe made the best poster and received a digital camera from the campaign sponsors for a prize. The most active region in the competition was Taraz, from where the panel received about 40 posters.

The third stage of the *We Care!* campaign was an exhibition of works presented in the competition in Almaty. Thirty-eight alumni from Almaty put the posters up around the city and distributed materials to smokers.



Photo by ACIE: Campaign participants

This activity was done in other cities as well. The fourth phase was the most unique event of all; all smokers could trade their cigarette pack for a new T-shirt with the sponsors logos. After a couple of hours alumni received around 200 cigarette boxes.

All participants gained invaluable experience in community service outreach through this project and said that they acquired a deeper understanding and respect for their health and surrounding people.



*Photo by ACIE:
We Care! Anti-tobacco campaign*

RECORDING OF THE FLEX SONG

In March Zhibek Karamanova '03 worked on the FLEX song with a music recording studio. She finished the recording on March 23. Alumni who were selected to sing the FLEX Song had several rehearsals. The goal is to have a final version of the song by the end of March and email it to all alumni.



*Photo by ACIE:
Zhibek and the FLEX singers*

FLEX ALUMNI AND ANTIRACISM WEEK

Twenty-three alumni came to a meeting to draw their attention to the issue of racism attitude in the world. Alumni watched *Crash*, the 2006 Oscar winner. The series of issues brought up in the movie led to an active discussion; alumni talked about why racism exists, what causes conflict between people, as well as people's prejudices and attitudes. Alumni agreed that it is a great movie that clearly reflects the essence of the present day, hidden details of everyday life and all the consequences of racism.

ACIE

CI ALUMNA ESTABLISHES CONSULTING CENTER TO SUPPORT REHABILITATION OF FORMER PRISONERS

Anna Korbeichshikova (CI 2001) recently opened a consulting center under the Public Foundation "Support the Prison Reform in Kazakhstan" (SPRK) of which she is director. SPRK recently received an institutional grant from the Civil Society Development Association (ARGO) under the rubric of the USAID-funded Civil Society Support Initiative (CSSI) to support the consulting center. The center will assist former prisoners and their relatives as they deal with psychological and social issues related to reintegration into society.

IREX

SEMINAR ON U.S. AND KAZAKHSTANI EDUCATION TAKES PLACE IN ATYRAU

On April 15 and 22, the IATP access site in Atyrau was the venue for a two-hour long seminar entitled "Education in the United States and Kazakhstan" which united 42 teachers of English Language, high school and college students, volunteers along with alumni of US-government-sponsored programs.



Photo by IREX: Ajenov speaks about US Government International Information Programs' main website at the IATP access site in Atyrau

IATP, in cooperation with the American Corner, organized the seminar in English so the participants could practice their language proficiency and, more importantly, learn about education in the United States and Kazakhstan.

Under the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan, the American Corner is a resource center for Kazakhstani citizens on American culture and education. Having spent an academic year studying at the Oklahoma State University, Nurlan Adenov (UGRAD 2004) created a multimedia presentation for the participants about UGRAD's application process, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), adjusting to life in the United States, living with a host family, coping with culture shock, making friends, and studying at a U.S. college. Adenov and the participants also browsed for other IREX-administered exchange programs on its website (www.irex.kz) and U.S. Government International Information Programs' main website (<http://usinfo.state.gov/>). Psychologist Robert Kerr and journalist Natesha Madison introduced participants to American volunteer movements, and concluded that in the U.S. nonprofit sector volunteers serve as a critical resource. Many college faculty members seek quality education to deepen and broaden their academic and professional expertise, which is not available in Kazakhstan and welcomed this opportunity by alumnus and other co-organizers to practice their English and learn possibilities to conduct research at American universities.

LIBRARIANS FROM KAZAKHSTAN AND BELORUSSIA DISCUSS ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN POPULARIZATION OF READING

On April 21, more than 38 librarians, alumni, and educators from nine libraries in Byelorussia and Kazakhstan united for an hour-and-a-half online chat at IATP access sites to discuss the role libraries play in the popularization of reading and books. The chat coincided with April 23, World Book and Copyright Day, which is celebrated throughout the world. Through this symbolic date UNESCO seeks to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright. The main goal of the online discussion was to analyze the role of libraries in stimulating residents' interest in books and popularization of reading, especially among youth.

Initiated by the employees of Begalin Children Library (BCL), IATP's partner organization in Almaty and moderated by Alexander Parfentyev, IATP administrator in Almaty, the discussion focused on the most effective methods for popularization of books and reading, government efforts to introduce IT in libraries, e-textbooks, hardships librarians face while using IT, the level of Internet usage by patrons, and other topics. The library infrastructure of Kazakhstan is heterogeneous and diversified and the network of libraries of the Ministry of Culture now constitutes more than 3,000 libraries. However, the public libraries in Kazakhstan need to correct the strategy of their development in light of active inculcation and wide-spread use of digital and Internet technologies, transformation of different types and forms in patron service, organization of the new type of services, all of which should help them to popularize reading and books among general population. As a result of the chat, more than 38 librarians and educators across Byelorussia and Kazakhstan now have ideas and resources to fill in the void in popularizing reading, and a better grasp of how the Internet can be used in pursuing this goal.

ONLINE IATP CHAT WITH IREX PRESIDENT

On May 18, 32 participants, including partner organizations' staff, alumni of US-Government-sponsored exchange programs, IATP administrators, and volunteers met with the IREX President Mark Pomar to share their accomplishments and ask questions about funding for IREX programs, along with its future plans for 12 IATP access sites and Independent Internet Centers (IICs) across Kazakhstan. The one-and-a-half-hour discussion began with the staff of the partner organizations' brief presentations about services and resources offered at the IATP access sites and IICs in their cities to introduce Mr. Pomar to their accomplishments.



Photo by IATP: Dimitri Lemayev accesses the web-chat with Mark Pomar from his workplace in Kyzylorda

During a question and answer session, each participant had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions mainly about the future funding for IATP, further partnership with IREX, and grant opportunities for local organizations. The chat enabled Mark Pomar to learn about the experiences, activities, and success of the IATP access sites and IICs in Kazakhstan, while the IATP partners, alumni, and administrators had an opportunity to inquire about IREX's plans, including new programs.

IREX

JOURNALISTS IN SEMEY INTRODUCED TO ONLINE MEDIA OUTLETS AND FORUMS

On May 3, the Independent Internet Center in Semey was the venue for a two-and-a-half-hour workshop dedicated to online media outlets for 11 local journalists commemorating World Press Freedom Day. Among the eleven participants were the chief editor of *Democracy* Newspaper Rahat Omarov, Semipalatinsk TV Channel journalist Alua Sakenkizi, the editor of *Arna* Newspaper Saltanat Abdusalyamova, and freelance journalists.

The participants had an opportunity to undergo training by Aliya Kalizhanova, IIC administrator, who introduced them to the Google news search engine (www.news.google.com), subscription to online media portal's listserv (<http://kubcat.subscribe.ru>), and local online digest (www.prof.in.kz). The journalists also explored and discovered a wide spectrum of online sources of information, including the UK-based magazine Guardian (www.guardian.co.uk/), EurasiaNet (www.eurasianet.org/), Reuters (<http://today.reuters.com/>), and International Federation of Journalists (www.ifj.org), among others.



Photo by IATP: The journalists explore online media outlets at the IIC in Semey

Zuhra Abdysheva (CC oo) helped the participants to focus their efforts not only on finding sources of information, but also on making connections with their counterparts in Kazakhstan as well as other countries who are active in promoting press freedom. To do this, Abdysheva and the journalists opened new topics on Kazakhstan's online forum (www.forum.kz), including topics such as E-Government: Reality and Prospects, Journalists and Local Authorities, and What the Freedom of Press Is. The workshop was dedicated to celebration of World Press Freedom Day, which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom throughout the world.

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear ECA Alumni:

We welcome your success stories, articles, letters to the editor, class notes, including personal notes, news, birthdays, marriages, promotions, and memorials. You may also post announcements related to alumni activities. We will be gradually including your stories as time and space allow. Please send your articles to mukanovaab@state.gov.

РЕДАКТОРДАН

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Біз сіздерден жетістіктеріңіз туралы әңгіме, мақала, хат немесе жаңалықтар, шаңырақ көтеру, қызмет өсу, еске алу, туған күн жөнінде хабарламалар күтеміз. Хаттарыңызды кезегі келуіне және бюллетеньде орынның болуына қарай шығарып отырамыз. Оларды mukanovaab@state.gov адресіне жіберіңіз.

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